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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, November 11, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOME LIGHTING NOTES." Information from the Extension Office,
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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When days grow shorter and evenings longer, as they do at this time of year, the lighting of the house is especially important. Lighting means a good deal to the comfort and convenience of the house. And lighting may affect eyes and nerves and often dispositions. So perhaps right now you would be interested in news of homemakers' clubs in various parts of the country that have taken up the study of home lighting.

Home Bureau groups in New York State have been learning how to light their homes to save eyes and also electric bills. And they have also been finding out how schoolrooms should be lighted to save children's eyes. As a result of this interest in lighting, Home Bureau exhibits at State and county fairs have lately been featuring attractive, economical and eye-saving lighting arrangements. And lighting displays were also a feature of the last annual Farm and Home Wekk at the State college.

One very telling New York State lighting exhibit showed two family living rooms that used the same amount of electricity with very different results. One room was so poorly lighted that it was mostly in gloom except for bright glaring spots of light under the two lamps. The reason for the poor light and general darkness of this room was that walls, woodwork, and furnishings were so dark that they absorbed light, thus wasting a good deal of electricity. Then, the table lamp was too low to shed much light and was set on such a wide table that no one could get near enough to use what light there was. In contrast to this was another living room which also had two lamps. They used the same amount of electricity but used it successfully. Because this room had light-colored walls and not too much dark furniture or dark woodwork, the light from the lamps was generally diffused. The light walls, you see, reflected the light and spread it more evenly about the room. The table lamp was tall enough and had a wide enough shade to give out considerable light. And it stood on a table which several members of the family could draw up to comfortably.

These two rooms demonstrated some of the points about lighting which Home Bureau members were learning at their club meetings last year. The New York State bulletin which they used for their study was written by Miss Florence Wright, housing specialist in that State, and it contains much lighting information useful to any homemaker. For example, let me quote Miss Wright on walls

and ceilings to give good light and prevent both gloom and glare. She says: "Since dark absorbs light, a room with dark walls will require a greater amount of lighting. So walls should be light enough to reflect light but not so light as to make a strong contrast with the woodwork and furnishings. Heavy contrasts are harsh and prevent a well-blended effect. Because shiny walls and woodwork reflect glare, a dull texture is preferable." In other words, have your walls light but not too light and use a dull rather than a shiny finish to prevent glare.

About the ceiling Miss Wright says: "Ceilings should be lighter than walls in order that the light thrown up to them will be reflected down. Light cream is a better color for ceilings than pure white because the latter gives a cold effect."

Now about getting the best light for the money you spend on electric bulbs. Quoting again: "In order to get the most light and longest service from bulbs, their voltage should correspond to that of the electric current used in the community. For example, if the community voltage is 115, bulbs marked at the tip '115-volt' should be used. American-made 'Mazda' bulbs, frosted on the inside not the outside are best. 'Mazda' is not a trade name but the name given to a type of filament..... When bulbs become old and dark, they use just as much electricity as new ones but give less light..... To get the most light, keep bulbs free from dust and dirt."

Finally, here is a New York State tip about shades for good lighting: "In general, all bulbs should be shaded to prevent glare, and the inside of every shade should be almost white in order to reflect as much light as possible. The outside color is not so important but it looks best when it harmonizes with the walls and furnishings."

In Minnesota last year women in home demonstration clubs were also studying lighting. And they too were interested in the problem of avoiding gloom and glare. Perhaps you would like to hear how the Minnesota lighting specialist suggests cutting down glare. She says: "Glare may result when lamps are shadeless and improperly placed, and when there is too much contrast between the source of light and the rest of the room. Eyes should be protected from lamplight by shades and diffused light through frosted bulbs. Changing the position of a lamp so that the light strikes the work on desk or table, or moving a floor lamp slightly to the rear of a chair or couch will direct light away from the eyes rather than into them. Glare can also be corrected by shades that enlarge the light area, reflectors that diffuse the light and sufficient lighting area to reduce the contrast between the light source and the rest of the room. It is unwise to use a lamp that illuminates a small area near its source, leaving the rest of the room in deep gloom."

And here is what the Minnesota specialist suggests about your electric light bulbs. She says: "Under average conditions, bulbs should be at least the following sizes: one 100-watt, or two 60-watt, or three 40-watt bulbs in each reading lamp; 100 watts in bedside reading lamps; and 60 watts in bathroom wall brackets. Poorly made bulbs waste electricity, give less light than they should, and grow dimmer with use. Look for the trade-mark of a reputable manufacturer on every bulb you buy. Replace promptly every burned out or blacked bulb."

There, listeners, are ideas about lamps and lighting from the Extension Services in New York State and Minnesota. Some day I'll report to you electrical studies that home demonstration clubs in other States are making.

